

Introduction

The National Student/Parent Mock Election's K-4 Program

When the *National Standards for Civics and Government* was published in 1994, one of the central arguments it raised was that although the goals, curricular requirements, and policies of every state "express the need for and extol the value of civic education, this vital part of the student's overall education is seldom given systematic attention in the K-12 curriculum." With this statement in mind, those familiar with the National Standards will not fail to be impressed by the degree to which National Student/Parent Mock Election's (NS/PME) early grades program "Learning to Choose" incorporates many of the Standards. For those of us who worked on the National Standards project, its influence on "Learning to Choose" is especially gratifying, given the sparse attention so often paid to civic education themes at the lower grades even where they are provided for at upper grades.

"Learning to Choose – the Mock Election in the Early Grades" is replete with general and specific reference not only to the content standards, but also to the participatory skills outlined on pages five and six of the National Standards document. These skills are divided into several categories that refer to training to work with others on common projects, and two others on the skills required, first, for "Monitoring politics and government"; and second, "influencing politics and government." As we will have occasion to notice, "Learning to Choose" trains young students in skills from all of these categories.

From the outset, "Learning to Choose" explicitly states its intention to fulfill various of the K-4 National Standards. Its introductory matter refers to the Standards on basic values and principles of American democracy that are incorporated in the new NS/PME early grades program. The authors correctly point out that in the course of participating in the program students will be required to recognize the individual rights of others, experience working for the common good, and discover the necessity of cooperation and conflict resolution to achieve common goals – all aims of *National Standards for Civics and Government*. Principal examples of the relationship between the National Standards and "Learning to Choose" will occupy the pages that follow.

Lesson 1 of the first Unit of the program is entitled "Freedom and Responsibility," concepts to which the students are introduced. The discussion of rules and the right to make rules corresponds to Section I. B of the Standards, "where do people in government get authority to make, apply, and enforce rules and laws and make^{make} disputes about them?" The right to express opinions and learning to respect the rights of others corresponds to Section V.C. in the Standards, "What are important rights in the United States?"

In Lesson 2, "No Rule Land," students discover why they need government, the topic in the Standards in I. C, "Why is government necessary?" Further discussion of the consequences of a lack of rules and government correlates to III.D. of the

Standards, "What are the major responsibilities of local government?"—responsibilities students find unfulfilled in "No Rule Land."

The third lesson, "Our Town" imagines a town where basic governmental services and rules and laws governing them are variously the responsibility of local, state, or federal governments, the subject of III. B., C., and D. of the National Standards, which treats the division of labor among the three levels of American government. This is also the subject of III.A., "How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution." The lesson is designed to present the concept that citizens are obliged to obey local, state, and federal law, a point covering the civic disposition to respect law found in V.D.4. of the Standards, which discusses "Dispositions that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs."

In "The Rule of Men vs. The Rule of Law" (Lesson 4), the subjects of the U.S. Constitution and, using different language, constitutionalism are presented. Students learn the difference between life under a "rule of law" and a "rule of men." These subjects are found in III.A.1. of the National Standards, "What is the United States Constitution and why is it important?" where the importance of law limiting the powers of government, therefore protecting the rights of the people, is discussed. The lesson also refers to the place of "We the People" in the American system, introducing the idea of popular sovereignty found in II.A.1. of the National Standards. Further, the lesson distinguishes between the functions of Congress and the President (III.B.2.); and it familiarizes students with the U.S. Constitution, describing it as "the highest law in the land," found in III.A.1.

Also in this lesson key rights of the people are articulated, including freedom of expression, of religion, from unfair discrimination, and suffrage. The fundamental importance of the U.S. Constitution as a means of protecting these rights is stressed, corresponding to National Standards III.A.1 & 2. The overall thrust of the lesson to teach the idea of the rule of law and respect for law is found in the Standards at II.A.1. in discussions of fundamental values and principles. These include, for example, the idea that "the powers of government are limited by law"; and at II.B.1 in the discussion of the distinctive characteristics of American society, which includes "Importance for respect for the law."

The fifth lesson, "The Class Constitution," incorporates material relevant to the Standards' I.E., "What are the purposes of laws and rules?" II.A.1., "What are the most important values and principles of American Democracy?"; III.A.1., "What is the United States Constitution and why is it important?"; V.C.1, on the rights of American citizens; and V.D.1. on the responsibilities of American citizens. Rules for the class are compared to rules for the nation as found in the U.S. Constitution. In the course of constructing a class constitution, a basic vocabulary of civic terms and ideas, such as majority/minority, freedom, rights and responsibilities, is explored, with older children helping younger children with the aid of a dictionary. A chart of terms and definitions is constructed and exhibited to the class.

If the creation of a body of rules is the theme of Lesson 5, the next lesson, "Choosing a class Monitor," deals with the selection of leaders for their enforcement. As treated in the lesson, this subject accords with section V.H.1. of the National Standards, "How should Americans select leaders?" and tangentially with material III.B.1. dealing with the responsibilities of the executive branch of government to carry out and enforce law.

Lesson 7 then turns to the key distinction between power and authority covered in National Standards in I.B.1., "Defining power and authority." This theme is followed by a lesson called "Making a Decision," which deals with procedures for making good leadership choices. The process models conscientious civic behavior in seeking and evaluating information about candidates and coming to a decision. This lesson also correlates with V.H.1., "How should Americans select leaders?"

Lesson 9, "Voting for Class Monitor," brings the preceding lessons to fruition by modeling the leadership selection process through voting. The entire extended school community, including both school administrators and parents and grandparents is recommended for involvement. This process is covered in detail by the National Standards in V.F.1., "How Can Americans participate in their government."

The first lesson of Unit 2, "Our Government," introduces students to the real world of political decision-making by familiarizing them with actual voting procedures, with the need for representative government, and with the distinctions among national, state, and local government. Among other aims, it also seeks to involve parents in voter education, a laudable aim for any civic education program. Among the Standards applicable to the lesson, perhaps most relevant are III.B.1, C.1, and D.1, on the functions of the three levels of American government as well as V.F.1, cited above.

The following lesson entails inviting a public official to speak to the class about community needs and potential provisions for them. As a follow-up activity, students are asked to consider the public officials required by a [make believe] town. These activities are relevant to several National Standards, including V.F.1., on political participation; the portion of V.D.1., civic responsibilities, on staying informed; and V.H.1., on leadership selection. In addition, a thank-you note sent to the visiting official models civility, discussed in V.E.1., civic dispositions that "enhance citizen effectiveness and promote the healthy functioning of American democracy."

The last five lessons (3-6) of Unit 2 deal in some detail, first collectively, then separately, with the division of responsibilities among federal, state, and local levels of government, the subject matter of section III.A-E of the Standards. After dealing with each level in turn, lesson 7 carefully reviews the functions of each branch (executive, legislative, and judicial) naming the principal officials or bodies at each of the three levels of government. Here, the functions of the judicial system are reviewed for the first time, carefully laying out its main functions, at an age-

appropriate level of understanding. The text rightly notes that teachers should not be concerned if at this early point in their civic education students do not completely master this material. It is enough that it is introduced to them; it will be repeatedly presented to them later in their education.

A notable feature of lesson 7 is the effort made to acquaint children, using charts as teaching tools, which level of government performs various functions, exactly correlating with material found at section III. E.1. of the National Standards. This is notable because a typical (and notorious) failing of adult American citizens is their inability to choose the proper level of government to solve problems. Telephone calls from citizens to congressional offices demanding action on street potholes or inadequate trash collection is an all-too-common occurrence.

The first lesson of Unit 3 of "Learning to Choose" closes in on the central activity of the NS/PME program, participation in mock elections, by introducing the concept of political parties, a subject dealt with among the forms of political participation in V.F.1 of National Standards. In this and the next lesson, forms of learning include skills found among the "participatory skills" section of the National Standards (p. 6.). Students watch news reports and consult encyclopedias, including CD-ROMs. In addition, they take a significant step in developing public speaking abilities, a key civic skill, by giving oral reports.

Subsequent lessons in Unit 3 (lessons 3-6) deal with creating and registering a political party, preparing for party nominating conventions, and participating in a convention, material relevant to section V. F. and H. of the National Standards dealing with political participation and the selection of leaders. Material in lesson 5 is notable for its careful enumeration of desirable qualities of leaders taken directly from the Standards, such as a commitment to the values and principles of constitutional democracy. The final three lessons of the Unit find students preparing for and holding candidate debates and participating in an actual election, activities correlated to V.F.1. of National Standards as well as to various of the participatory skills of p. 6 of the Standards' front matter.

The lessons of Unit 4, "Political Communication," are significant for their concentration on participatory skills, dealing with substance at the same time. In Lesson 1, letters are written to U.S. Senators. As background, considerable knowledge about both houses of Congress is covered, some of which is more rigorous than National Standards (III.A.1.-B.1.). A newspaper article is read and dissected, and legislative members are invited to class. In lesson 2, a mock press conference is held, followed by a lesson that prepares students for interviewing candidates, activities relevant to V.E.1. and participatory skills (pp. 5-6) of the Standards.

The next lessons (4-6) role-play and evaluate a mock press conference; followed by lessons (7-9) dealing with "call-in" programs, especially televised versions of call-in programming. All of this teaches how to participate in government (V.F.1.) but it also fosters a range of desirable civic dispositions (V.E.1.). Material dealing with freedom of speech and its limits, assurance of diversity of opinion, and other rules

of the road, as it were, for call-in programs is relevant to Standards on values and principles of American democracy (II.A.1.) and promoting the ideals of American democracy (V.F.1.). Emphasis on volunteering fosters this deeply important trait of American society (II.B.1.); while sending thank you letters to parents who volunteer to assist in the program reinforces both voluntarism and civility (V.E.1.)

The climactic unit of "Learning to Choose" is titled, as might be expected, "The Election." Lessons in this unit deal with consideration of a number of the electoral offices involved in biennial and quadrennial elections at national and state levels, including election of congressional representatives of both houses of Congress, governors, and the president. A commendable technique of "Learning to Choose" is illustrated in the first lesson, which reviews material of earlier lessons on the three jurisdictions of government as preparation to understanding the complexity of electoral races and choices in elections (III., B., C., D. in National Standards). Significant, too, is that even in these early grades, students are directed to the World Wide Web to gather relevant information (see, "participatory skills," pp. 5-6 of National Standards).

The lessons deal with various of the National Standards. Lesson 2 is particularly instructive in that it calls for a clearly unconstitutional measure to be passed and signed into law, but is struck down in the courts. This highlights a key idea of American constitutionalism, that of limited government (I.G.-H., II.B.1., and III.A.-B. of the Standards). Lesson 3 includes a number of participatory skills as well as content standards, such as III.A.1. Lesson 4, on the presidency, has students research the U.S. Constitution itself to learn the president's powers and, significantly, asks students to see how the president's powers are limited, and goes further by asking them *why* the Framers limited the president's powers (see National Standards, I.G.-H. and III.A.1.). The Unit is rounded out by lessons on organizing a mock presidential debate, getting out the vote, and, finally, the Mock Election itself. In this final lesson, students act-out some of the complexities of modern elections, such as arranging for voter registration, ballot distribution, poll and ballot box watching, and vote tabulation (National Standards F., G., H.; participatory skills, pp. 5-6).

In summary, the National Student/Parent Mock Election's "Learning to Choose" program for early grades incorporates numerous of the K-4 National Standards for Civics and Government. Its lessons relate to every section of the National Standards except foreign affairs. It is gratifying and commendable that the authors took such pains to incorporate so many of the Standards into lessons that might in other hands have drawn on only a few.

Charles F. Bahmueller, Ph.D.
Center for Civic Education

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	i
Unit 1: Learning to Choose	
Lesson 1: Freedom and Responsibility.....	1
<i>Jimmy and Janie Like to Read</i>	2
Lesson 2: No Rule Land.....	3
Lesson 3: Our Town.....	4
Lesson 4: The Rule of Men vs. The Rule of Law.....	5
Lesson 5: The Class Constitution.....	7
Lesson 6: Choosing a Class Monitor.....	9
Lesson 7: Power and Authority.....	10
Lesson 8: Making a Decision.....	11
Lesson 9: Voting for a Class Monitor.....	13
Unit 2: Our Government	
Lesson 1: Visiting a "Real" Polling Place.....	15
Lesson 2: Inviting a Public Official to Visit Our Class.....	17
Lesson 3: The Three Divisions of Government.....	18
Lesson 4: Local Governments.....	19
Lesson 5: State Governments.....	20
Lesson 6: National Government.....	21
Lesson 7: The Three Branches of Government.....	22
Unit 3: The Political Process – "Political Parties"	
Lesson 1: The Meaning of Political Parties.....	24
Lesson 2: How Do Political Parties Work?.....	25
Lesson 3: Creating Political Parties.....	26
Lesson 4: Registering with a Political Party.....	27
Lesson 5: Preparing for Party Conventions in Which Candidates for Class President are Nominated.....	28
Lesson 6: Participating in a Party Convention.....	29
Lesson 7: Preparing for the Candidates' Forum or Debate.....	30
Lesson 8: Holding the Debate.....	31
Lesson 9: "The Election".....	32

Unit 4: Political Communication

Lesson 1:	Class Letter to Your State's U.S. Senators and/or Your Congressman/woman.....	33
Lesson 2:	"A Mock Press Conference"	35
Lesson 3:	Preparing to Interview Candidates (or Mock Candidates).....	36
Lesson 4:	Wording Our Questions.....	37
Lesson 5:	A Mock Press Conference.....	38
Lesson 6:	Evaluating Our Press Conference and Visit.....	39
Lesson 7:	Watching or Listening to a Call-In Program.....	40
Lesson 8:	Visiting a Local Cable TV Company.....	41
Lesson 9:	Preparing for a Mock Cable TV Call-In Program.....	42
Lesson 10:	The Mock Cable TV Call-In Program.....	43

Unit 5: The Election

Lesson 1:	Overview: The Races for Governor, the Congress, the Presidency; focus on the Senate.....	44
Lesson 2:	The Governor.....	46
Lesson 3:	Congressman or Congresswoman.....	48
Lesson 4:	The President of the United States.....	49
Lesson 5:	Organize a Mock Presidential Debate.....	51
Lesson 6:	Returning to "Our Town"	54
Lesson 7:	Get Out the Vote.....	55
Lesson 8:	The Mock Election.....	56
Web Sites of Political Parties.....		59

Unit 1

Learning to Choose

LESSON 1

Freedom and Responsibility

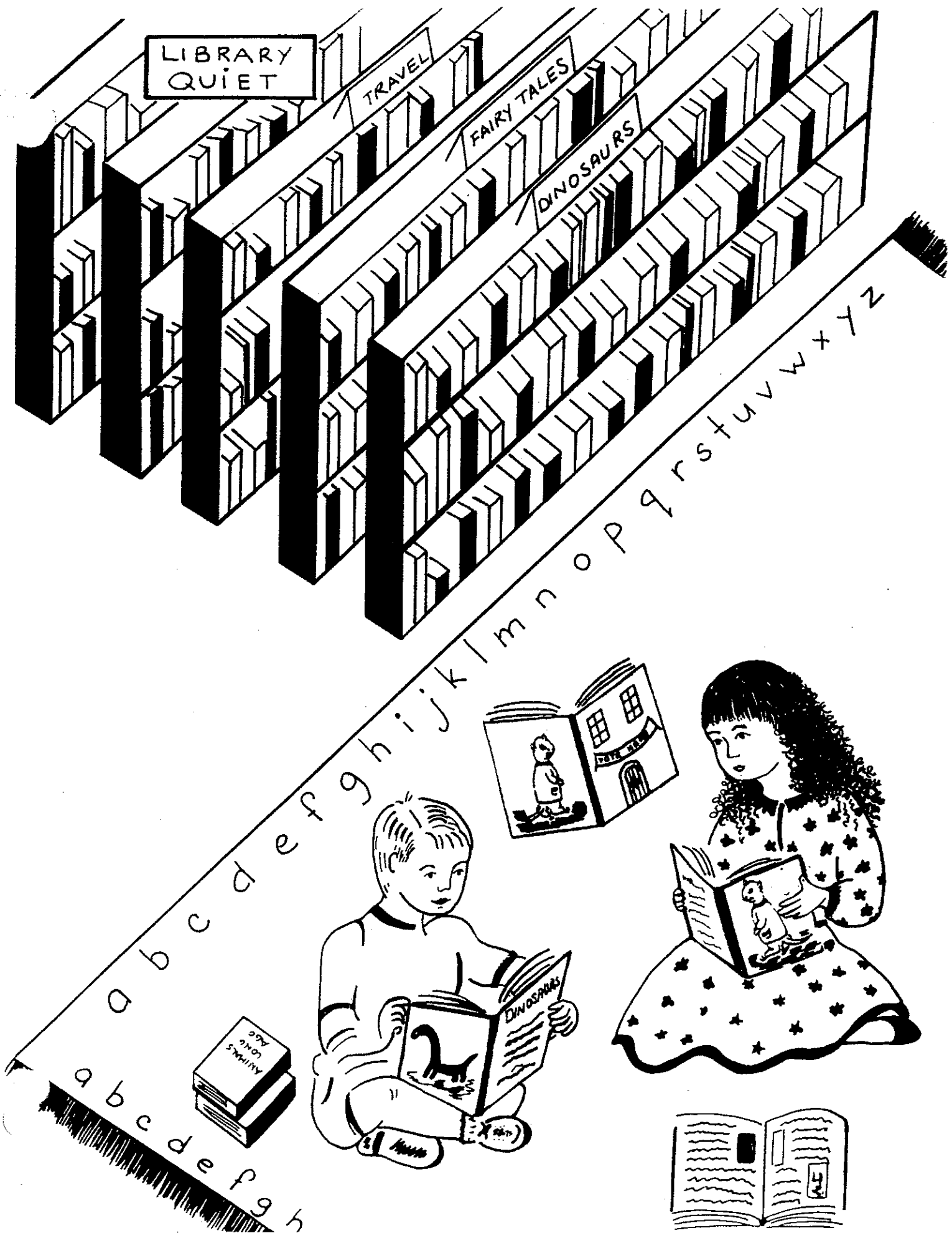
Objective: To introduce students to the concepts of freedom and responsibility. To give students the opportunity to express opinions freely but courteously.

Materials: A copy of "Jimmy and Janie Like to Read" (attached), chart paper, markers, computers, access to the internet.

Procedure:

- Read the story *Jimmy and Janie Like to Read* to the class.
- Discuss the likes and dislikes of each reader.
- Work in cooperative learning groups to reread the story.
- Discuss and chart things that Jimmy likes/dislikes; the things that Janie likes/dislikes and the things the students may like/dislike.
- Have each group role play their own choices in front of their classmates.
- While students are role playing, graph the likes/dislikes of each group.
- E-mail another class and compare their likes and dislikes with your class.
- After all the graphing has been compared and e-mails exchanged, discuss with the students why each individual in a democracy is free to have his/her own opinion and to express it as long as they do so courteously and respect the rights of others.
- Discuss the rules Jimmy and Janie must follow. What gives parents, schools, parks, and libraries the right to make rules? What are the purposes of rules and laws? How do the students feel about all the rules? Do they each have the right to express their opinion if they do so courteously? If they did so out loud in a library where the rule was "quiet," would they be respecting the rights of others? Why? Why not?

Optional substitute: Dr. Seuss, *Oh The Places You'll Go*. (Don't miss the golden opportunity to point out that in America, people travel freely whereas some other countries keep their citizens as virtual prisoners.)



Jimmy and Janie Like to Read

Jimmy is a curious boy with blonde hair and blue eyes. He is a second grader at Mountain Lake Elementary School. He has a cute neighbor who lives next door to him and her name is Janie. Janie is a quiet girl with dark brown hair and dark eyes. She is a second grader too. Jimmy and Janie carpool to school every day and enjoy playing together. Jimmy and Janie enjoy the same teacher at school, her name is Miss Cricker. Jimmy and Janie really like school even though there are lots of rules there. You have to walk in line a lot of the time and go very quickly if there is a fire drill. You can't talk unless you raise your hand for permission except at recess. Jimmy and Janie enjoy most of the subjects that are taught but their very favorite is reading.

Jimmy likes to read all kinds of books. His favorite books are about dinosaurs. He can tell you the name of every dinosaur, but he really does not like to read about snakes. Snakes scare him, but insects do not. He also likes to read about heroic people, adventures in frontier times, circus and zoo animals, science experiments, and traveling to different lands but he does not like to read about people being hurt.

Janie likes to share her books with Jimmy. She likes to read about great men who have been President. Perhaps she will be the first woman President! Janie does not like to read about violence. She likes to read about dogs, adventures in babysitting, adventures of children in other lands, and fairy tales from other lands, but she does not like to read about insects, especially bees, because she was stung once and she is allergic to bees.

Jimmy and Janie like to go to the library for books. The library has lots of rules; you may take out only four books at a time and you must pay a fine if you bring them back late. If you read in the library, you must be quiet and not disturb other readers.

When Jimmy comes home from school, he likes to have a snack. His favorite snack is a chocolate chip cookie but Janie likes to eat popcorn. After their snack, they go off on their bikes to the park where Jimmy climbs the slide and Janie swings on the swings. The park has rules, too, like "keep off the grass." The day is not complete until they both head home for dinner. Janie is having pork chops for dinner tonight. Jimmy would rather eat with Janie because at his house they are having sloppy joes. Janie goes off to bed without a peep at 8 o'clock so she will be refreshed for another big day, but at Jimmy's house the rule is 8:30.

"Good night. Sleep tight. Don't let the bed bugs bite," says Janie's brother. "The rule is no teasing," says Janie's mother. Jimmy and Janie may each choose one more story before they are tucked into their beds for a good night's sleep. What do you think they chose?

LESSON 2

No Rule Land

Objective: To discover why we need governments, or people and groups with the authority to make, carry out and enforce the rules (or laws) and to manage disagreements about them.

Materials: A carton, a package of clear plastic wrap and magic markers to create the knobs on a "TV set," drawing paper and crayons. (Note to teacher: the TV set will be used again for newscasts from "Our Town.")

Procedure:

- Cut out a "TV Screen" in the back of the carton. Be sure the screen is large enough for a child's head and shoulders to be seen. Cover the opening with clear plastic wrap and place the carton on its side on a desk or draped table so the "newscaster" can stand behind the "TV screen."
- Select teams of "newscasters" to broadcast what is happening today in "No Rule Land" where nobody knows which side of the street to drive on and there are no traffic lights or stop signs because there are no rules. There are no schools or libraries or highways or bridges because nobody has to pay taxes. The strong can take advantage of the weak because there are no rules and no police. There is no army or navy to defend "No Rule Land" because there are no tax monies with which to pay them. People can put their garbage any place they wish. There are no rules about when garbage must be picked up.
- After the "TV newscasters" have described the chaos taking place, ask the students to draw pictures of what happens when there are no rules.

Discuss:

What would happen in a school with no rules? Would students feel safe? Why is government necessary? What are some of the most important things governments do? What are the purposes of rules and laws?

(Note to teacher: The K-4 Content Standards of the New Standards for Civics and Education will be an invaluable asset to the teacher covering these lessons. The Standards can be ordered from the Center for Civic Education. \$14. Call 1-800-350-4223.)

LESSON 3

Our Town

Objectives: To create an imaginary town where services and rules or laws are sometimes the responsibility of the town, sometimes the state, and sometimes the federal government.
To discuss the division of power in our democracy.
To vote for a name for our town.

Materials: A roll of wrapping paper or newsprint long enough to cover the width of the blackboard. Drawing paper, crayons, scissors, and paste. (Note to teacher: the "town" will become the backdrop for several lessons. Some teachers may wish to keep it going through the holiday season and allow the students to decorate their town.)

Procedure:

- Ask each child in the class to draw a building to place in "our town." Be sure there is at least one school, post office, police station, fire station, courthouse and stores. If possible, include a river, a highway (interstate), and a railroad and railway station in the town.
- Ask the students to cut out and paste the buildings in their town. When the town is finished, ask students to suggest possible names for it. List all the names on a chart. Tell the students that each child may choose or vote for just one name. When you read that name, all the students who would like it best will raise their hands to "vote." The name with the largest number of votes wins.

Discuss:

- Other possible ways to vote that the students know about. How do they believe the people in their town will vote? Who will make the rules for the town? Who will make sure the rules are obeyed? Will the only rules the town needs to be concerned about be town rules?
- Which rules does the US post office in the town need to be concerned about? If a train from far away goes through the town, will the railroad engineer be concerned only about the town's rules? If a boat that started its trip far way passes the town on its way down the river, will the captain need to know about any rules besides the town's rules? Will the citizens of the town pay taxes to the town? Why? Why not?
- What rules or laws would the students like to suggest for their town? List the ideas on a chart and save the chart for a future lesson.

(Note to the teacher: Use this introductory lesson to elicit the student's current ideas so that you can "start where the child is," and gradually build the concept of federal, state, and local laws that the citizens of the town must obey.)

LESSON 4

The Rule of Men vs. The Rule of Law

Objective: To demonstrate the difference between living under the rule of law and living under the rule of men.

To find out why the purpose of the Constitution is to protect the rights of people and limit the rights of government.

Materials: Two cartons to create puppet stages, fabric for curtains, puppet clothes, old socks and/or balloons for making hand puppets, scissors, paste, colored paper, gold paper or aluminum foil for a king's crown, newspaper.

Procedure:

- Cut openings in the backs of the cartons to allow small hands to manipulate hand puppets. Make slots for the puppeteers eyes. Place a cardboard band a few inches high across the bottom front of the carton to conceal the manipulator's hands. Staple a string holding the curtains across the tops of the cartons.
- Create puppets for the casts of two shows; the first featuring a king and his subjects, the second a president and "we the people." If you choose to use balloons for puppet heads, rolled sheets of newspaper can make arms and legs. (Choose smaller sized papers.) Fold one roll over the other to create a V shape. Use a rubber band to attach the balloon to the newspaper body. Paste on colored paper eyes and a mouth. Add a crown for the king. Dress the puppet. The newspaper puppet operator places his fingers through slits in the newspaper rolls. (Note to teacher: It may be necessary to cut off the ends of the rolls to achieve arms and legs of the right size. You will use the puppet stages and the puppets for future lessons.)
- Select students for several traveling "theater companies." The "theater companies" will create two traveling puppet shows. The first will depict a king who is an absolute ruler, with power of life or death over his subjects. Whatever he tells them to do, or not to do, no matter how unfair, must be obeyed for fear of their lives.
- The second show will depict a president and "we the people." Explain that in our democracy the president cannot make the laws, he can only suggest the laws he would like to see passed. "We the people" elect members of Congress to make the laws on our behalf. (We cannot all go to Washington and write the laws, but we can write to and/or visit our representatives in Congress and tell them what laws we would like to see passed.) The President can veto a law if he thinks it is a bad law, but even his veto can be overruled if most of the members of Congress disagree with him.

- Discuss how long it took "we the people" to win the power that kings and dictators used to have and still do have in some parts of the world.
- Ask students to be sure their puppet shows make clear the difference between living under the rule of men and under the rule of law.
- Show students a copy of the U.S. Constitution, "the highest law of the land."

Discuss with the students:

- What is the U.S. Constitution and why is it so important? In our democracy, the government is our servant and not our master. Even the President of the United States must obey the laws. The Constitution is the set of laws that "we the people" wrote to limit the powers of government; the people control government, and they have the right to change it and remove anyone working in government who is failing to fulfill his or her responsibilities.
- The Constitution is the highest law of the land. Nobody in the government can make laws that take away the rights the Constitution gives to the people. We are a government of laws, not of men. The Constitution states that the purposes of government are protection of the rights of individuals and to promote the common good.
- What are some of the people's rights?
The right to:
 - freedom of expression
 - freedom of religion
 - freedom from unfair discrimination
 - freedom to vote
- (Reminder to the teacher: These are introductory lessons. You, and the teachers who follow you, will build upon them as time goes on. The important initial concepts for young students are that in our democracy we are all equal before the law and that the purpose of the Constitution is to protect the rights of the people and limit the rights of government.)
- Help the students make a tiny copy of the Constitution to place in the hand of the "we the people" puppets.
- Send the traveling "theater companies" to other classes to share their new knowledge about the Rule of Men vs. the Rule of Law.

LESSON 5

The Class Constitution

Objectives: To exercise critical thinking skills while choosing the rules for our class.

To write a class constitution.

Materials: Dictionaries, chart paper, markers, 6th grade buddies, computer with access to the internet.

Procedure:

- Invite older students to help younger students write their class constitution. Discuss with both groups why there needs to be rules for our class just as there are rules for our nation. Ask older students to help younger ones look up in the dictionary such words as rule, principle, value, belief, freedom, rights, responsibility, consequence, diversity, majority, minority, and vote. Write the definitions on a chart. Hang the chart on the classroom wall.
- Ask the younger students to suggest some of the rules they believe would make their classroom a good place to spend the day. What rights should their class constitution protect? How should the diversity of the students in the class – and their right to be different from someone else – be protected?
- What other values or principles should their class constitution protect? e.g. if a child breaks a rule, should the consequences be the same for him or her as for any other child? Must each child respect rights of other students? of the teacher?
- Explore with the students the consequences they believe would be fair ones if a rule is broken.
- Explore the kinds of consequences that would not be fair. What limits do they believe should be placed on their class government? (e.g. a child who has broken a rule may not be physically hurt as a punishment).
- Invite the older students to suggest possible rules and consequences for the class.
- Encourage the younger students to debate whether or not the rules and consequences being suggested would be fair to each of them.
- Allow the younger students to vote on each of the rules and the consequences proposed for their class constitution.
- Ask each child to sign the constitution that has been approved by majority vote.

Discuss:

- Will those who voted with the minority still need to follow the rules? How can the citizens of a democracy work to get rules they disagree with changed?
- Send copies of the class constitution home to parents.
- E-mail your school principal or assistant principal and ask for a visit to your classroom so that the students may share what they have learned about the values and principles of a democratic society with their visitor.
- How do they relate these values and principles to their own experience in writing a class constitution and voting on it?

LESSON 6

Choosing a Class Monitor

Objective: To learn how to make wise choices.

Materials: Chart, markers.

Procedure: Explain that now that the class has a set of rules, or a constitution, a class monitor is needed to watch that nobody breaks the rules, or to report on a broken rule if necessary.

- Brainstorm the qualities and characteristics the students believe would make a good class monitor (e.g. fairness, courtesy, honesty, etc.). Record the ideas on chart paper.
- Invite class monitors from upper grade classes to come and tell the younger students what they do.
- Ask if listening to the upper grade monitors has given the students new information and new ideas for their chart.
- Ask the students to suggest, or nominate, members of the class they believe might make a good monitor.
- Ask each of the nominees if they are willing to be a candidate for monitor.
- Make a list of nominees who have agreed.
- Tell the students they will soon vote for class monitor but first they must learn more about how to make wise choices when they vote.

LESSON 7

Power and Authority

Objectives: To explore the difference between the power of authority and power without authority.
To understand that authority comes from custom, law and the consent of the governed.

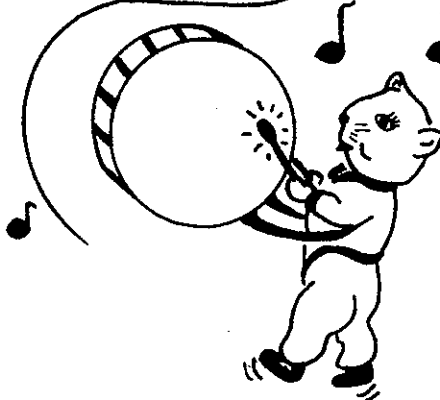
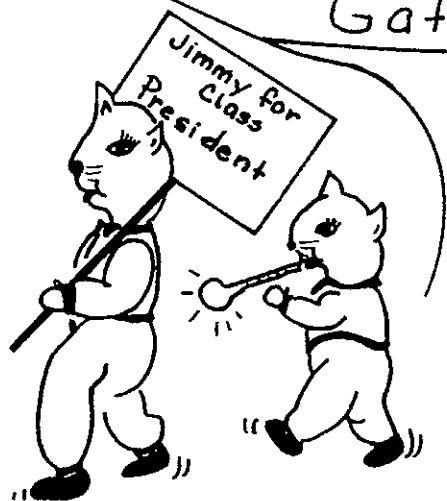
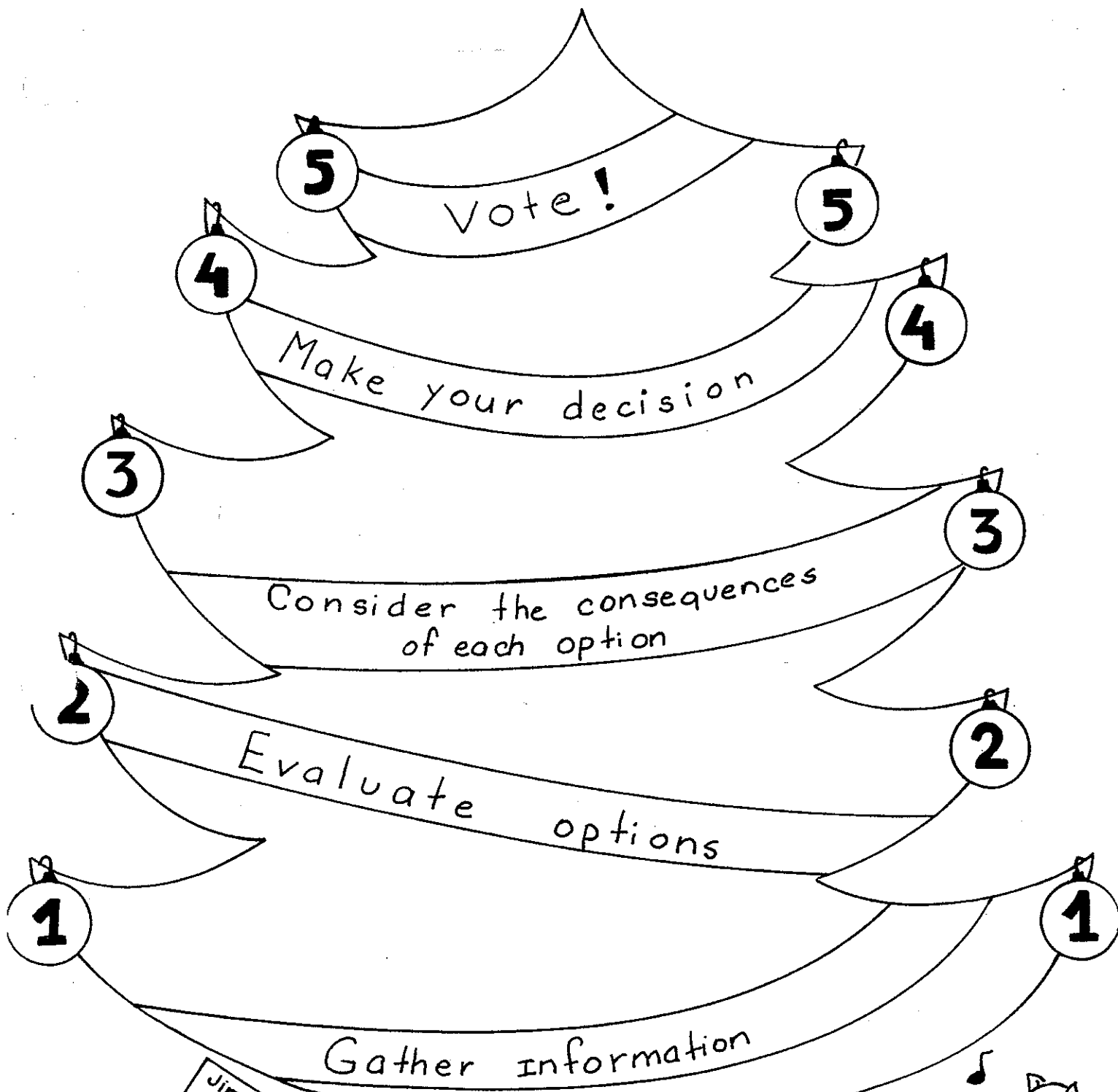
Materials: The puppet stages, a puppet dressed to look like a bank robber, a puppet representing a bully, puppets representing students and other citizens.

Procedure:

- Look up "authority" in the dictionary. Look up "power." How are they alike? How are they different?
- Discuss why parents, teachers and principals have authority. Where does the authority come from?
- If students vote to give another student authority, where will the authority come from?
- Identify examples of trying to use power without authority.
- Stage a puppet show to show examples of the misuse of power (e.g. a bully trying to force younger students to give him their lunch money, a robber trying to rob a bank, etc.).

Discuss:

- If an elected official used his authority to give good jobs to his friends and to members of his family, whether or not they were the best person for the job, would that be a proper use of power?
- If a traffic policeman gave a speeding ticket to people who were speeding but were not his friends, then let his friends speed by him without giving them a ticket, would that be a proper use of authority?
- If the class constitution has a rule that everyone in the class must (*choose a rule from the constitution*) but the class monitor reported only the people he didn't like if they broke the rule, would that be a proper use of authority?
- Stage additional puppet skits to show proper and improper uses of the power of authority.



LESSON 8

Making a Decision

Objective: To explore the steps of decision making that will allow us to make a wise choice about our vote for class monitor.

Materials: Worksheets for each student containing a "decision tree" that can be colored. (See student handout page.) Chart paper, markers, crayons.

Procedure:

- Hand out worksheets.
- Tell students they will be permitted to color and decorate their decision trees as they wish as soon as they have "climbed" the tree.
- Introduce the steps of decision making.

Step 1: Gather Information

- Explore with students what information they will need in order to vote for a good class monitor. (e.g. What does a monitor do? What powers and authority will we give the monitor? What kinds of students might make good monitors?)
- How can students get the information they need?
- Invite older students to visit the class and share information about what their class monitor does, and the kind of students they believe makes good class monitors.
- Discuss how political campaigns allow citizens to get information about and evaluate the candidates before they vote.

Step 2: Evaluate Options

- Tell nominees they will be given an opportunity to campaign before the class votes so that the voters will have enough information on which to base their choice.
- Ask the students to help you list the qualities they would like to see in a good class monitor.
- Make a class chart with the list of qualities the students suggest.
- Ask students to keep their own "charts" about each nominee during the campaigns. Has s/he convinced the voter s/he has the qualities that are important? Do the students believe they have enough information to make a decision?

Step 3: Consider the Possible Consequences of Each Option

- Ask students to help you list what they believe would be the consequences of a wrong choice. What might happen if they elected a bad monitor? Why do they need to have enough information before they vote? Should they vote for the most popular or the best looking nominee? Why? Why not? Should they vote for someone who likes to bully? Why? Why not?

Step 4: Decision

- Tell students they can make "a tentative" decision now but can change it until they vote. After eight weeks you will ask them to reevaluate their decision and tell you whether or not they believe the class made the right choice. (Look up "tentative" and "reevaluate" in the dictionary.)
- Allow students to decorate their decision trees and post the best looking ones as a permanent reminder of the steps of decision making.

LESSON 9

Voting for Class Monitor

- Objective:** To engage students in the election process as they choose a class monitor by campaigning with peers, older grade peers, teachers, administrators, parents, and grandparents.
To give students the opportunity to register and to vote for class monitor.
To engage students in cooperative learning to achieve a common goal.
To involve parents in voter education.
- Materials:** Chart paper, markers, ballots, ballot box, pencils, poster boards, oak tag button-making paraphernalia, old cardboard rolls to make "microphones," T-shirts, alphabetical list of students' names to be used as registration forms, individual ballot cards made from index cards, polling booth for classroom (this can be another cardboard carton on a desk positioned to ensure privacy), ballot box (a covered carton with a slit in the cover), computers, access to the internet.
- Procedure:**
- Give the "candidates" an opportunity to campaign for class monitor. Invite older students to become the young "candidates" campaign managers. (Make sure that the teachers in the older grades are aware of the guidelines for selection a campaign manager, e.g., good grades, good role models, mature, etc.)
 - Discuss the role of the campaign manager with both groups together. During the course of the next few days, have older students assist the younger students in creating speeches, posters, slogans, buttons, T-shirts, bumper stickers, "TV commercials" (to be presented on the class "TV set"), "brochures" with lists of campaign promises, and mock press interviews.
 - Invite parents and grandparents to the class for the mock press interviews and campaign speeches.
 - Allow the students who are not candidates or campaign managers to make "microphones" and role play reporters interviewing candidates on TV. Use black construction paper to cover old cardboard rolls (paper towel or toilet tissue). Use the "TV" the class previously constructed to present the commercials and conduct the press interviews. Encourage "reporters" to prepare their interview questions beforehand.
 - Discuss the reasons for a secret ballot when you are voting for a person.
 - Appoint one child in the class to serve as election judge.

- Have students sign their names in the registration column of the alphabetical listing that was made up earlier and state their names to the election judge. The election judge will hand them their index cards (voting ballot).
- Students will take their cards to the polling booth and mark their choice for class monitor.*
- When they come out of the booth, students drop their cards into the ballot box without allowing anyone to see.
- Have older students count the votes and report the results to the teacher.
- Share the election results with the class.
- Discuss with students how they followed the steps of decision making to arrive at a decision about their vote.
- Share with students why losing one election can be the first step toward winning another.

(*Note to teacher: If students are not yet able to read the candidate's names, candidates can be "color-coded" (e.g., red for Janie, blue for Jimmy, with each candidate wearing their large color-coded name tag as the voting proceeds).

Unit 2

Our Government

(Note to the teacher: For some classes this unit may take only a few days, for others it may take a few weeks. The teacher will wish to adapt these lessons to the needs of the class.)

LESSON 1

Visiting a "Real" Polling Place

Objectives: To familiarize students, at an early age, with actual polling procedures.
To expand the concept of local, state and national branches of government.
To understand the need for representative government.
To understand that in order to make a well informed decision, voters need adequate information about a candidate's position on issues.
To help students understand that sometimes the voters may vote directly on issues.
To involve parents in voter education.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, permission slips for field trip, bus, chaperones, arrangements made with the place you may be visiting for polling place (e.g. State Capitol or County Courthouse. If your school is a polling place, this may be simpler!)

Procedure: • You may wish to make a preliminary visit before setting up a field trip to the closest polling place. Visit alternative sites such as the State Capitol, County Courthouse, etc., or ask the local elections clerk to set up a voting machine demonstration in the school. Be sure to invite parents. This will be a learning experience for everyone.

Prior to the visit:

- Discuss the importance of exercising your right to vote.
- Discuss the reasons for one vote per person and secret ballots.
- Discuss voting procedures.
- Discuss some of the issues that concern voters in your state or within your school district boundaries (e.g., a bond election for money for more schools or money for local libraries).

During the visit:

- Discuss which issues local voters will vote on directly. Which issues will the winning candidates vote on for them? Why must voters elect public officials rather than directly voting on everything themselves? How can voters place an issue on the ballot? What must a candidate do to get his name on the ballot?
- Record the student's ideas about local issues that concern voters (to save for the next lesson).

After the visit:

- Have students decorate thank you cards to the people who helped them during their visit.
- Students who are able can write in their journals how they felt and what they thought about their visit to the polling place, one issue or candidate that they would like to vote on or for, and why that issue or candidate is important to them.

LESSON 2

Inviting a Public Official to Visit Our Class

- Objective:** To involve students in everyday issues that affect their lives by inviting a local public official to visit in person or write a letter to the class.
- Materials:** List of issues students selected in previous lesson, paper, marker, computer, access to the internet.
- Procedure:**
- Chart the issues discussed in the previous lesson and talk about the pros and cons of each issue. Tell the students that the class will write a letter to local public officials inviting them to come and talk to the students about the issues that concern them. Tell them you will invite parents to be present for their visits.
 - After all the issues from the chart have been discussed, append them to the class letter and ask the public official to respond to the students' concerns in writing if they are unable to visit.
 - Ask each local official to be prepared to share what his/her job is like if s/he can visit.
 - Ask the public official to share what he/she sees that needs to be done for the school and/or community.
 - Follow up with a thank you note from the students to the officials who visit or write to them or send an e-mail instead.
 - Invite the students to consider what kinds of public officials they believe their [make believe] town will need. Start a list of possible public officials for the [make believe] town.
 - Where will the people in their [pretend] town go to vote?
 - What issues do the students believe the voters in their [make believe] town will be concerned about? Keep a list of possible issues.
 - Tell the students you will return to the lists for their town in a future lesson.



LESSON 3

The Three Divisions of Government

Objectives: To discover how the U.S. Constitution describes how the government should be organized.

To understand why the U.S. Constitution is so important:

- It states that the basic purposes of government are to protect individual rights and promote the common good.
- It limits the powers of government by saying what government can and cannot do.
- It describes what the national government can and cannot do, what state governments can and cannot do, and what local governments can and cannot do.

Materials: Blackboard and colored chalk, crayons, paper, scissors, paste, chart paper, markers, an American flag.

Procedure:

- Draw a circle on the board about one foot in diameter. Within the circle place some small houses. Name the circle the name of the town or city in which you live.
- Draw a square or rectangle of another color around the circle. Add some houses to this square or rectangle. Use both colors of chalk for the houses. Name this square or rectangle the state in which your town or city can be found.
- Draw a large rectangle the width of the entire blackboard around the circle and the smaller square. Use a third color. Name this large rectangle the United States of America. Put smaller squares or rectangles in it to represent the many states in the United States of America.
- Reinforce the concept by studying the American flag. Point out that each star represents a state in the United States of America and in each state there are towns and cities just like ours.
- Ask the students to decide which state their make-believe town is in. Is it a part of the United States of America?
- Point out that their [make-believe] town or city will need rules or laws.
- If it is part of a state, it will also have to obey the state's laws.
- If it is part of the United States of America it will have to obey the nation's laws. How can they know who can make which laws? Look for the answers in the Constitution!

LESSON 4

Local Governments

Objective: To discover the responsibilities of local governments.

Materials: The imaginary town the students have created, crayons, paper, scissors, paste. A copy of the Constitution.

Procedure:

- Use the student's imaginary town as a point of reference to avoid speaking in abstractions. Encourage the students to draw new buildings and other places for their town as new ideas occur to them.
- Ask the students to help you list the responsibilities of their town's government,* e.g.
 - public safety (police, fire, lighting services)
 - public utilities (water, gas, electricity)
 - transportation (streets, bus or subway systems, airports, harbors)
 - education and recreation (schools, libraries, parks, museums, sports facilities)
- Discuss how local government services are paid for
 - property taxes and other taxes
 - money from state and national governments (stress this interrelationship)
- Discuss how local government officials are chosen, e.g.
 - election
 - appointment
- Chart what the town government may do and how it will pay for it. Post the local government chart.

(*Children who are ready may wish to search the Constitution themselves; for others the teacher's belief in the Constitution as the "highest law" may be the most important lesson.)

LESSON 5

State Governments

Objective: To discover the responsibilities of state governments.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, the students [make believe] town and a copy of the Constitution.

Procedure:

- Explore what state governments can do, e.g.
 - collect taxes and fees for using toll roads and license fees
 - collect state income taxes
 - decide how to spend tax money
 - build hospitals, roads, and highways
 - make laws about education and health care for citizens of the state
 - protect fish and game in the state
 - provide public welfare for citizens who need help
- Discuss how the state can help the student's town protect the rights of individuals and promote the common good.
- Chart what the state government can do and how it will pay for it.
Post the state government chart.

LESSON 6

National Government

Objectives: To survey the responsibilities of the national government.
To find out how the national government can protect the rights of individuals and promote the common good.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, the students [make believe] town and a copy of the Constitution.

Procedure:

- Explore what national governments can do, e.g.
 - pass laws to protect individual rights (freedom of religion and expression, preventing unfair discrimination)
 - pass laws to protect the common good (clean air, national parks, national defense, pure food and drug laws, laws that provide every American with equal opportunity)
 - collect income taxes
- Chart what the national government can do and how it will pay for it. Post the chart.

Discuss:

- How will the actions of the national government affect the people in the [make believe] town?

LESSON 7

The Three Branches of Government*

Objective: To explore how national, state and local governments each divide power and authority among the three branches of government.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, a copy of the Constitution, the [make believe] town, several copies of a local newspaper. (The teacher will wish to select stories about the local town or city legislature in advance of the lesson.)

- Procedure:**
- Illustrate how the Constitution provides for three branches of government on three charts.
 1. *The Executive*
 - In the nation the Chief Executive is the President, in the State it is the governor, and in the town or city it is generally the mayor.
 - The Executive *carries out* the laws (e.g. the President may assign different responsibilities to different agencies such as the Department of Transportation, the Department of Education, etc.).
 - Together with the President (or the governor, or the mayor), the agencies or departments see to it that the laws are carried out. *They may not make the laws.*
 2. *The Legislative*
 - The Congress passes the laws for the nation, e.g.
 - The Congress can pass laws to protect individual freedom (freedom of religion and expression, freedom from discrimination).
 - The Congress can pass laws to promote the common good (e.g. laws providing for clean air, national parks, national defense).
 - State legislatures may pass laws about education and health care for citizens of the state.
 - Since the federal government helps pay for education and health care, however, the Congress may also pass laws about education and health care.
 - State legislatures may pass laws to protect fish and game.
 - State legislatures may pass laws about welfare, etc.

* **Note to the teacher:** You may wish to teach this lesson over a period of several days, or even weeks, adapting it to the needs of your class. You or your successors will be returning to these concepts again and again. Do not be concerned if they are not mastered completely at this point. Many adult citizens will not understand as much as the students will understand.

Discuss:

- What will the [make believe] town's legislature be called? What laws may the citizens of the [make believe] town pass? What ideas can the students get from stories in their local newspaper?

3. *The Judicial*

- The Judicial branch, headed by the Supreme Court, makes decisions about whether the laws passed by Congress are good laws.
 - Do they protect individual rights? the right to a fair trial, to vote, to practice one's religious beliefs? Do they provide citizens with the guarantees the Constitution promises?
 - Do the laws protect equal opportunity for all Americans? Do they promote the common good?
- After you have charted what the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of government may do, post the charts to return to in future lessons.
- Return to the student's town. Ask the students to draw some of the citizens of their town and cut out and paste them in the town. Suggest that they include some citizens who have problems for which they need the government's help, or citizens who believe the government must do more to promote the common good. Ask each child to identify the citizen's problem.

Discuss:

- Which government – local, state, or national – can best help with the problem? Refer to the charts to help find the answers.
- Who should take care of a problem like a missing traffic light; the federal, state or local government?
- Who should take care of a problem like discarded cars or trucks left rusting on the streets; the federal, state or local government? Why?
- Who should take care of a problem like children allowed to use BB guns where it is not safe? The federal, state or local government? Why?
- Do the students believe any of the problems require a new law to protect individual rights or promote the common good? Should it be a local law, a state law, or a federal law?
- Return to the list of rules or laws the students suggested for their make believe town in Unit 1, Lesson 3. Which of the rules or laws do they now believe the town legislature can pass? Which must be passed by the state legislature? Which by the U.S. Congress? Why?
- Return to the list of issues the students prepared in Unit 2, Lesson 2. Which of the issues on the list do they now believe would be best dealt with by public officials in the town? Which need to be dealt with at the state level? Which at the federal or national level?

Unit 3: The Political Process "Political Parties"

LESSON 1 The Meaning of Political Parties

Objectives: To introduce students to the concept of political parties.
To engage students in an experience with their parents or grandparents to explore the meaning of political parties in their relatives' lives.

Materials: Dictionaries, chart paper, markers.

- Procedure:**
- Have students research and then discuss the meanings of the following terms: democracy, political parties, symbols, convention, platform. (Note to the teacher: Be sure to discuss the different meanings of "party.")
 - Make up a questionnaire with the students so they can interview their parents or grandparents about the political party to which they belong. Examples – to which party do you belong? why did you join this party? what beliefs do the members of your party share in common? what symbol represents your party? which elections do you remember best? what was important about them?
 - Have students report back to classmates the results of their interviews.
 - Encourage students to watch a TV news report with parents that focuses on election issues and respond to the experience. Was there any mention of the positions on issues taken by a political party?
 - Ask students to discuss with parents:
 - Do the different parties always completely disagree with each other or do they know of times when they agree with each other about some questions but not about other? (e.g. both Democrats and Republicans agree that education must be improved but disagree about how best to improve it.)
 - Do the different parties sometimes cooperate for the common good? When? (e.g. Bipartisan support for a declaration of war.)
 - Share parents' responses with the class.

LESSON 2

How Do Political Parties Work?

Objectives: To involve students in acquiring knowledge about the political parties in the United States.
To discover how political parties can influence government.

Materials: Encyclopedias – books as well as CD-ROMS (Grolier's, Encarta).

Procedure:

- Have students work in cooperative learning groups to do research on the Democratic or Republican Party (or Libertarian or other third parties). One student can look up the origins of the particular party; several can delve into the history of the party and the party platform; another can report on Presidents of the party; still another can do research on the symbols of the Democratic, Republican or third parties; another can report on how a party seeks to influence the government.
- Each child will prepare and deliver an oral report on that aspect of the party about which he or she did research.

LESSON 3

Creating Political Parties

Objective: To give students an opportunity to create political parties for their class.

Materials: Chart paper or chalkboard, paper, pencils.

Procedure:

- Brainstorm names for political parties for the class. Limit to no more than three parties. Choose symbols and write platforms. What would each party like to see the class do? Have each party include in its platform a commitment to some form of community service. For example, party members can volunteer to remove graffiti from bathroom walls, clean up the playground, volunteer to read a story to younger students.

LESSON 4

Registering with a Political Party

Objective: To register students to vote with the party of their choice. (This activity can be done in conjunction with Lesson 2 and/or 3.)

Materials: Alphabetical lists of students' names to be used as party registration forms, individual registration cards made from index cards.

Procedure:

- Have each student decide to which party s/he chooses to belong.
- Type students' names in alphabetical order on the student registration form.
- Have each registering student sign his or her name in the registration column. Indicate which party has been chosen in the student's presence. (Keep this form to be used on the day of the class election.)
- Explain that students are not required to register with a party in order to vote, but they must register if they wish to help choose the party's candidate.
- Register those who do not want to be members in any party as "independent."

LESSON 5
Preparing for Party Conventions in Which Candidates
for Class President are Nominated

Objectives: To involve students in the analysis of characteristics and qualities that a good (class) president should possess.
To examine the responsibilities of a position of authority.

Materials: Experience chart.

Procedure:

- Ask students to think about what qualities and characteristics the President of the U.S., governor of their state or the mayor of a town or city should have as the "Chief Executive." What are the limitations of the position of leadership? How will the role of the class president differ from the role of the monitor? from the role of the President of the U.S.? of a governor or mayor? How might it be the same?
- Identify qualities leaders should have such as:
 - commitment to the values and principles of constitutional democracy
 - respect for the rights of others
 - ability to work with others
 - reliability or dependability
 - courage
 - honesty
 - ability to be fair
 - intelligence
 - willingness to work hard
 - special knowledge or skills
- Elicit the attributes students want their class president to have.
- Record the students' ideas on the chart paper. (Keep the experience chart so the students can refer to it when they hold the nominations.)
- Ask the students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each party's candidates in terms of the qualifications required for a leadership role such as Class President.

LESSON 6

Participating in a Party Convention

Objective: To allow the students to participate in a simulated party convention at which they nominate candidates for class president.

Materials: Poster boards, oak tag, button-making paraphernalia, T-shirts.

Procedure:

- Tell the students that they are going to hold their party conventions. (They will participate in the convention of the party for which they previously registered.)
- Assign an area in the classroom in which each party can meet.
- Have each party vote for their candidate for class president. (Do the students want this to be a secret ballot? Why? Why not?)
- During the course of the next few weeks have each party create posters, placards, slogans, buttons, T-shirts, campaign brochures, bumper stickers in support of their party's candidate.
- Encourage the students to actively campaign for their party's candidate during recess or at other appropriate times.

LESSON 7

Preparing for the Candidates' Forum or Debate

Objective: To actively engage students in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of candidates.

Procedure:

- Have students watch TV with a parent or look through local newspapers with a parent to find articles relating to the election in which candidates either debate each other or state opposing viewpoints on issues.

Discuss:

- Do the candidates identify the party they represent?
- Do the candidates attack each other, or do they show respect for each other?
- Do the candidates display a commitment to the values and principles of constitutional democracy?
- Do the candidates discuss the issues reasonably and fairly or do they avoid the issues?
- Create a bulletin board and display the clipped articles.
- Challenge students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates they have watched or read about in terms of the qualifications required for a particular leadership role.
- Challenge students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each party's candidate for class president in terms of the qualifications they believe are required.
- Invite each party to privately coach its candidate prior to the Candidates' Forum or Debate.

LESSON 8

Holding the Debate

Objectives: To provide each of the candidates with an opportunity to write and deliver an oral speech in order to persuade their classmates to vote for them.
To give all students an opportunity to develop questions to be used in the debate among the candidates for each party.
To engage students in cooperative learning to achieve a common goal.

Materials: Paper, pencils.

Procedure:

- Organize the class into committees for the following activities. This is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to stress with the students the necessity for cooperation and the manner in which citizens in a democracy have to work together for the common good to get their goals accomplished, i.e., the election of their candidate to office.
- Candidates for each party will prepare an opening statement citing reasons they would be a good class president, and a closing statement summing up their arguments.
- One committee is in charge of the debate – students will establish the rules for the debate, decide how much time each candidate will have to respond to questions and choose a time keeper.
- One committee, comprised of members from each party, will write the questions for the debate.
- One committee will write letters inviting parents to help and/or be the audience for the debate.
- If the teacher believes the class is ready, one committee can write letters to the local press, inviting them to attend the debate.
- Review the steps of decision making with the students.
- Hold the debate.

LESSON 9

"The Election"

Objective: To involve the students experientially in the actual voting process.

Materials: Paper, pencils, markers, cardboard poll box, ballot box.

Procedure:

- Choose a committee to be the "Election Commission." The "Commission" will help the election judge ensure that voting is conducted in an orderly and timely manner.
- Have other committees make ballots, including absentee ballots, and the ballot box.
- Invite parents to be "poll watchers."
- Have each candidate prepare an acceptance speech.
- Have each candidate prepare a gracious congratulations to his/her opponent and "thank you" to party supporters to be used by the candidates who do not win.
- Decorate the polling place with patriotic signs and symbols.
- Have each student sign his/her name on the registration form and then vote in secret.
- Have members of the Election Commission count the votes and report the results.
- Have each student write in their journals or give an oral report on how they felt and what they thought about the experience of voting for a class president, or working cooperatively to help their party's candidate win.
- Evaluate with the students what role the debate played in their decision.
- Review the steps students took to arrive at their decision.

Unit 4 Political Communication

LESSON 1

Class Letter to Your State's U.S. Senators and/or Your Congressman/woman

Objective: To communicate by e-mail or mail to our U.S. senator(s) and congressman/woman about how the class is learning to choose, and to invite our U.S. senator(s) and congressman/woman and/or members of their staff to visit the school.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, computers, access to the internet, several copies of the Constitution.

- Procedure:**
- Invite upper grade students to join the younger students on a "Constitution Treasure Hunt."
- Discuss with both groups:
- How does the Constitution organize the nation's legislature? Why do you think the writers of the Constitution chose to have two "houses" in Congress, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of representatives?
 - Team older and younger students for the "Constitution Treasure Hunt." The team that finds the most answers first wins.
 - How many senators are there?
 - How many representatives are there?
 - Why are there so many more representatives than senators?
 - How many senators can there be from each state?
 - Why do bigger states have more representatives than smaller states?
 - How old do you have to be to be a senator?
 - How old do you have to be to be a representative or congressman/woman? (Explain the interchangeable terms.)
 - Which bills must begin in the House of Representatives?
 - What is the difference between a "bill" and a law?
 - What can the Senate do that the House of Representatives cannot?
 - Can a bill ever become a law if both "houses" do not vote on it?
 - Which branch of government can veto a bill that the House and Senate have passed?
 - How many votes does it take to overcome a veto?
 - Which branch of government can decide that a law that has been passed by both the Senate and the House is unconstitutional?

- The following news story appeared in newspapers across the country in March 1999.

Clinton asks for vote on class sizes

WASHINGTON (AP) – President Clinton yesterday pressed for a vote on teacher hiring subsidies, the centerpiece of his education agenda, attached to a popular Republican school bill moving through Congress.

"The choice is simple: Are we going to give Americans smaller classes or more partisanship?" Clinton said in his weekly radio address. "Are we going to put politics ahead of progress or put 100,000 teachers in our nation's classrooms?"

Clinton accused GOP congressional leaders of "trying to shut down debate" and thwart his proposal for another round of grants to help schools reach the goal Clinton and Congress set in 1998 of hiring 100,000 new teachers over the next six years.

In budget negotiations leading up to last November's election, Republicans agreed to the first round of grants, more than \$1 billion, to be released in July.

The goal is to cut pupil-teacher ratios in the first through third grades. The national average now is 22 pupils per teacher, and Clinton wants that reduced to 18 or fewer.

- Write a class letter inviting your senator(s) (and/or congressman/woman) to visit your class and participate in a Mock Press Conference about reducing class size for grades 1-3. Tell them you will be inviting parents to join you. Ask that a member of their staff come if the legislator cannot, or, if neither can come, that they write a letter to the class telling you whether or not they believe the President's position is correct, and why.
- Invite candidates for the Senate and the House from all parties to come and speak with your class (whether or not they can participate in the Mock Press Conference).
- Consider inviting members of your state legislature or their staff to come and participate in a Mock Press Conference about increasing state funding for schools. If they are too busy, perhaps they can write a letter as well.
- Ask the legislators to tell you how much of the money for education comes from the federal budget and how much from the state budget.

Discuss:

- What kind of legislative body will govern your [make believe] town? Will the town be able to decide how many students there should be in a class? Why? Why not? Where will the town get the money for its schools?

LESSON 2

"A Mock Press Conference"

Objective: To watch "Meet the Press" with members of the family in preparation for a Mock Press Conference.

Materials: Homework activity sheet.

Procedure:

- Assign the students, with the help of family members, to watch the TV program: "Meet the Press."
- Send home the homework activity sheet. (Examples of questions on activity sheet: Who were the guests on the program? What was the topic to be discussed?) What were some of the questions? Were the questions fair? What role did the moderator play? How did the reporters treat the guest?
- Ask students to fill out the activity sheet with family members and bring it back to school.
- Alternate option: watch the prerecorded video and fill in the activity sheet as a class.
- Discuss the student's observations.

LESSON 3

Preparing to Interview Candidates (or Mock Candidates)

- Objective: To gather information about current problems affecting our schools and communities.
- Materials: Newspapers, photographs, magazines, survey sheets, televisions, computers, access to the internet, *Scholastic and Weekly Reader*, chart paper, markers.
- Procedure:
- Have students look through local newspapers, magazines and search the internet with the help of parents to find articles relating to current problems affecting your school or community. Bring the information to school.
 - Have *Scholastic and Weekly Readers* available for the students to read and share with other classmates and older students.
 - Create a bulletin board to display clipped articles, photographs, etc.
 - Use the preliminary information to create a survey of problems and a class questionnaire with the students, e.g. Would a change in class size help solve the problem? If so, how? If not, what would?
 - Ask families to help fill out the survey and questionnaire and talk about the problems with students as they fill them out.
 - Gather all the information from the surveys and questionnaires and record the ideas on chart paper.
 - Brainstorm ideas that would be good questions to ask the candidates.
 - Discuss the role of the free press in a democracy. Are there any questions that cannot be asked?

LESSON 4

Wording Our Questions

Objective: To give students the opportunity to frame well thought out questions for their senator and/or congressman/woman (or a staff member) when they arrive at the school.

Materials: Chart paper, markers.

Procedure:

- Break the class up into groups. In each group students will select a moderator, reporters, and guests. All participants role play the press conference.
- Urge students to not only ask and answer questions that were already developed, but to follow-up on the answers with additional questions as necessary.
- Invite parents to come to the practice Press Conferences and make suggestions.
- Select the students who will be the moderator and the reporters in the Mock Press Conference.
- Decide who will run the video camera, the tape recorder, and take photographs.

LESSON 5

A Mock Press Conference

- Objective:** To actively engage students in an actual visit from their senator(s) and/or congressman/woman or members of their staff* to the school.
- Materials:** Chairs, refreshments, video camera, still cameras and tape recorder.
- Procedure:**
- Invite parents, grandparents, administrators, reporters and other classes.
 - This is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to stress with the students the necessity of cooperation. Discuss why citizens in a democracy have to work together for the common good if they want to accomplish their goals. How can a visit with our congressman/woman and/or senator(s) achieve that?
 - Ask the congressman/woman or senator to talk about their duties and how the duties of senators and congressmen/woman are alike or different; how alike or different from those of a state legislature? If time permits before the Mock Press Conference, ask visitors to also share with students something about where they went to school and how many children they have.
 - Conduct the Mock Conference. Follow the "Meet the Press" model as closely as possible.
 - If time permits, walk the visitors through your building to let them see your needs, your neighborhood needs, etc. (Let them see where the money you are requesting will be spent! Encourage the students to actively participate in the dialogue.)
 - Videotape the whole program from beginning to end.

* If neither public officials or staff members can be secured, ask a family member or faculty member to step in and role play.

LESSON 6

Evaluating Our Press Conference and Visit

Objective: To evaluate the visit of a public official and our Mock Press Conference.

Materials: Evaluation forms, pencils, daily journals.

Procedure:

- Ask students to write/draw a composition about the special visitors and what it meant to them to share with the visitors.
- Compose a class thank you letter to the visitors and enclose the student's compositions and drawings.
- Ask students to fill out evaluation forms with the help of an older grade student if necessary.
- Possible questions:
 - Did the public official answer questions directly or change the subject?
 - Were the answers informative? (Did they give us information we did not know?)
 - What did we learn from the experience?
- Have students write or draw in their journals about the special visitors and what they learned about the democratic process.
- Gather the students together and watch the video.

LESSON 7

Watching or Listening to a Call-In Program

Objective: To watch a "Call-In" TV program or listen to a radio program in which the listeners call in their questions with the families.

Materials: Notes to go home.

Procedure:

- Send a note home with the students to ask parents to watch or listen to a Call-In TV program or radio program with their students.
- Discuss the programs the students watched. Were the questions asked good questions? Why? Why not?
- Was the host courteous?
- Did the program provide useful information?
- Did the family enjoy listening? Why? Why not?

LESSON 8

Visiting a Local Cable TV Company

Objective: To visit the local studio of a cable TV company.

Materials: Field trip permission slips, buses, chaperones, video camera, journals, chart paper, markers.

Procedure:

- Prior to this activity you may want to visit your local studio without the students to make arrangements for the class trip.
- Visit your local studio with the students. Invite parents; this will be an excellent learning experience for everyone. (Suggested alternatives for schools too far from a cable TV studio would be a mock cable TV program, or one that older grade classmates televise to be shown on the school's own system if possible.)

Discuss:

- What do the people working at the local cable TV company do? What are the responsibilities of the producers? directors? camera persons? What would their responsibilities be in a public emergency? How do they choose to whom to give air time? How do they assure that the diversity of the community is represented? How do they try to promote the values and principles of American democracy? Are all the citizens allowed to speak freely if they appear on the air? Are they permitted to criticize the government? If there are limits put on free speech, what are they? How do the students feel about these limits? Are they fair? Are they consistent with democratic values and principles?
- Do the cable company employees enjoy their jobs? What kinds of problems do they have on the job? What type of schooling is required for each job?
- If the cable TV company does not mind, videotape your field trip experience.
- Have the students write or draw in their journals what they enjoyed the most on their field trip.
- Send a thank you note to the cable TV studio.

LESSON 9

Preparing for a Mock Cable TV Call-In Program

Objective: To organize a mock cable TV call-in program.

Materials: Scrapbooks, newspaper and magazine clippings.

Procedure:

- Students will choose a "moderator," parent stand-ins as candidates for governor, and student "campaign staffs" to help the candidates prepare for their mock cable TV program.
- Have students consider choosing an older grade student to be their "moderator."

Discuss:

- The role of governor as Chief Executive of the state. How does the job of a "Chief Executive" differ from that of a legislator? How does the governor's job compare with the President's? What is similar? What is different?
- Ask for parent volunteers to act as stand-in candidates for governor from each party.
- Create a scrapbook from the previous lessons of newspaper clippings, magazines and photographs to "brief" the candidates for governor from each party.
- All students who are not on the campaign staff will be responsible for "calling in" a question. Ask students to prepare their "call in" question as a homework assignment. (Do this the day before if possible.)
- Ask for volunteers with video cameras who will come and videotape your call-in program.
- Rehearse with the staff, stand-ins and moderator.
- Consider whether or not to invite the press to your "program."
- Consider whether or not to invite another class.

LESSON 10

The Mock Cable TV Call-In Program

Objective: To actively engage students in a mock cable TV call-in program.

Materials: Video cameras, classroom decorations and furniture to resemble a TV set.

Procedure:

- Put the student's cable call-in program "on the air."
- Have students evaluate the program afterwards by writing or drawing one thing they liked about the program and one thing that they would like to change. What did they learn about the responsibilities of a governor? What did they learn about the positions of each party's candidates?
- Share the videos with a local cable company and ask them to evaluate it and let you know how well you did.
- Write a class thank you letter to the parents who volunteered.

Unit 5 The Election

LESSON 1

Overview: The Races for Governor, the Congress, the Presidency;
focus on the Senate

- Objectives:** Students will review the three jurisdictions of government. Students will gain a general understanding of the definition and purpose of state as well as federal senators. Younger students will begin to understand that people whose names are on the signs run for office to tell the capitol in Washington DC what we want to make life better and to make new laws when we need them.
- Materials:** Clipboard, paper, pencils. Optional: 10 copies of the local newspaper with stories on U.S. Senate candidates, maps of state and country, computer access to the internet, copies of the federal constitution (you could acquire your state's copy too for enrichment) possibly for each student, permission to take walk if required by your school.
- Procedure:**
- Discuss and review the three jurisdictions of the government: federal, state, and local and the candidates that may be running at each level. (Use a map – show what cities their offices would be in.) Review why parties are important to help getting elected.
 - Take the students on a walk around the school or nearby area where they can view signs, write down names, colors of signs, parties, office. Tell the students to note which signs they thought were most eye catching.
 - When you return from the walk, look for the names on their list in the newspaper and target the candidates for U.S. Senate, governor, and Congress. Write each candidate's name on a list and cut out and take notes on the information in the newspaper articles. Use these notes during the entire unit on Congress, the races for governor and the race for President.
 - Discuss what the requirements are to run for the Senate. Ask where we would find out. Read the Constitution: Article 1, Section 3.
 - On web site (list attached), have a small group look up the responsibilities of a U.S. senator. See if they can find the candidates' web sites. (Optional: read state constitution requirements for a state senator and note the differences.)

- Have student brainstorm a list of questions to ask their state and federal senate candidates. The teacher types or writes on the computer as the students generate questions in a large group discussion. Call, e-mail, or send a letter with your questions to the current people in office and the candidates if you have addresses. Include an invitation for them to visit and speak to the class.
- Discuss letters to the editor in the newspapers. Discuss opinion writing vs. factual news stories and having good reasons for opinions based on facts. Possibly read a few so students can hear models of this form of writing. Thinking ahead: at the end of the unit, after reviewing all the candidates, students can choose one to support and write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.
- Ask students to look at TV, newspapers, or magazines with their parents for information about the candidates. Assign a conversation with parents to ask what they can learn together about the candidates.

LESSON 2

The Governor

Objectives: Students will gain a further understanding of some of the responsibilities of an elected official and the balance of power of the three branches of government by playing the part of a legislator, governor, or judge. Students will understand the concept of the chief executive of the state vs. the chief executive of the nation.

Materials: Set up classroom with table at the front for judge, the governor in a chair to one side and the legislators on chairs to another side. A copy of the state constitution, 3x5 actor cards defining the role of each student in a simulation of the three branches of government in action.

Procedure:

- Review who is running for governor. Explain a governor's responsibilities as executive of the state – compare to the president as the executive of the country. (If available, read that portion of the state's constitution that explains the governor's office.)
- Explain a simulation that the students will act out. "We will each have a place in the government process in order to understand the kinds of thinking needed to be a governor, senator, or congressman or judge." Appoint or vote on a judge, legislator and executive/governor from the class to represent the three branches of government. The rest of the class will be legislators.
- Scenario overview: The legislator has just convinced the class and the other legislators that it would be a good law if all brown-eyed students ate in their classrooms because the cafeteria is too crowded and loud. The governor signs the bill and it becomes law. One brown-eyed student objects to having to eat in the classroom and takes the law to court. The judge must look at the Constitution and see if the state law follows the U.S. Constitution or laws of the country. Allow class discussion. (Review the balance of the three branches of government.) The law cannot be upheld because it is not allowed by the Constitution. It discriminates against one group of students. No state shall enforce any law which denies a person equal protection of the laws: Amendment 14 – The Rights of Citizens.
- Discussion: Sometimes laws that don't follow the nation's laws are passed by legislators and judges have to decide whether they can stay as laws and whether they follow the rules of the U.S. Constitution. (Introduce the U.S. Supreme Court as the ultimate authority on whether or not a law is constitutional.)

- Ask parents to help students look for additional information in the newspaper or local magazines about candidates for governor. Look at web site **state.(put in 2 initials of state).us** to read about your current governor.
- Update the bulletin board with the new information the students bring in.

LESSON 3

Congressman or Congresswoman

Objective: Students will understand the role of a congressman/woman and why there are more congressmen/women than senators in Washington (balance of power).

Materials: Internet access, computer room, paper, pencils.

Procedure:

- Review news articles and candidates from first lesson.
- Look at the Constitution again to see the requirements to be a congressman/woman – Legislative Branch: Article 1, Section 2. Discuss the difference between the requirements for senator and congressman/woman. Why do you think they are different? Read the powers of Congress and the powers denied to Congress in the Constitution. Have each student go on the internet and try to search for information.
- Possibly by this time you will have heard from other congressional candidates who can speak directly to the students. Schedule a time for the candidates to visit the class.
- Ask students to discuss with families the way the government affects their daily life. Note: In some families there is no discussion about politics or local issues and how the outcome of an election can effect one's daily life. The simple fact that the town hall/city hall is government may be news to the students.
- Follow the family discussion with a discussion listing the ways the government effects daily life to bring a closer understanding of the importance of voting: amount of taxes to pay, education, arts, police and military, business laws, minimum wage, regulations on cars and transportation, etc. Thinking about the bigger issues like treaties between countries could be included with older students.
- Invite parents, TV or news reporters to come in when the candidate visits.
- After the visit, have the class write a group letter or individual letters to tell the candidate what they have learned from his/her visit about the balance of power, the roles of local and state government vs. the national government, and/or the issues that affect their daily life.
- Make a chart for the bulletin board of the office, requirements in the Constitution to hold office, and the responsibilities listed in the Constitution for each office being discussed – President/governor, senator, and congressman/woman.

LESSON 4

The President of the United States

Objective: To survey the responsibilities of the President.
Students will understand what a President can and cannot do and how he can use the high visibility of the Presidency to persuade citizens.
Students will explore how a President can use the support of his/her party to get legislation passed.

Materials: Class "TV set" and a copy of the Constitution.

Procedure:

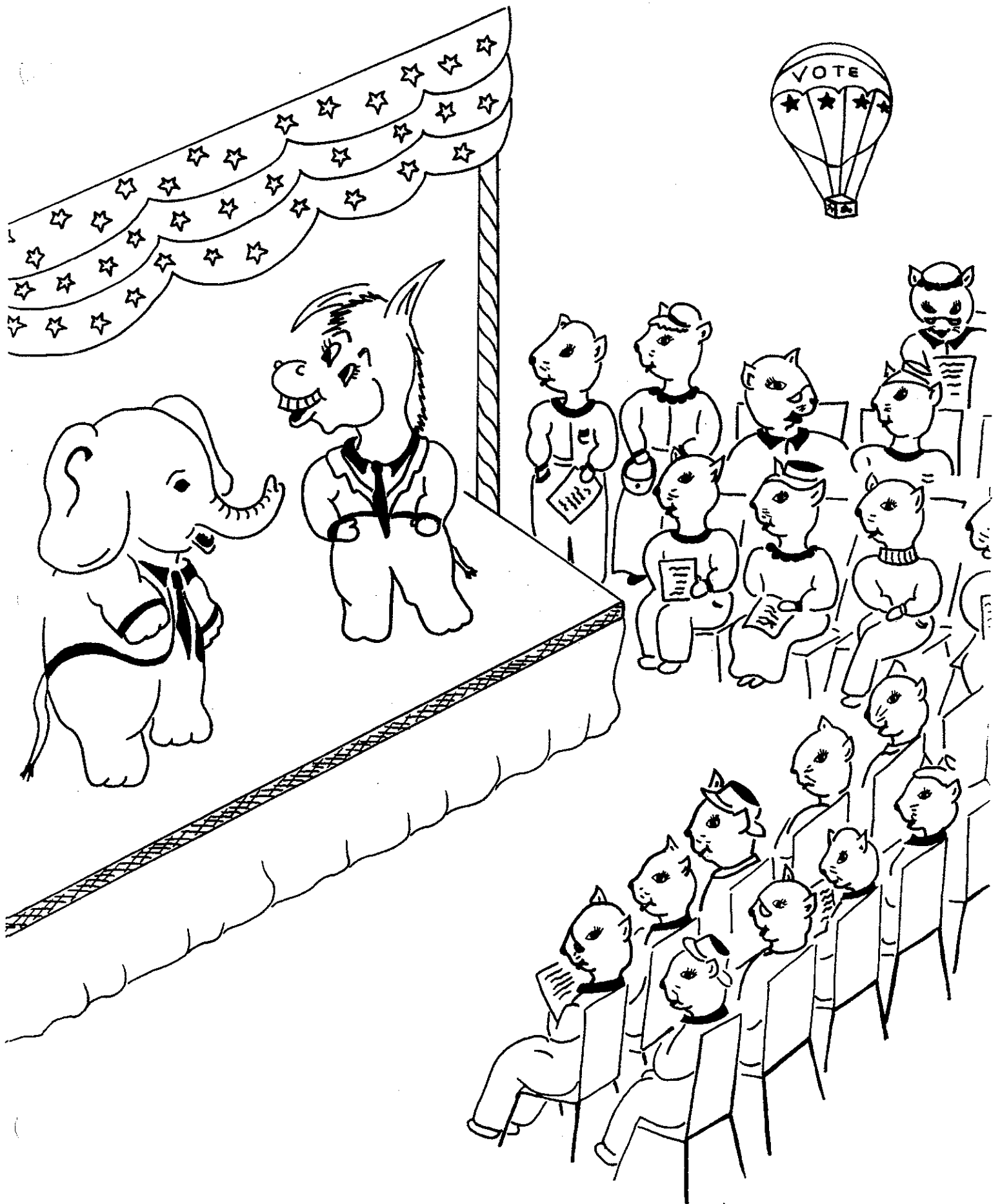
- Examine the Constitution of the United States.
Discuss:
 - How many places can the class find where the powers of the President are listed? (Early primary grade teachers may wish to use simple wording to explain relevant sections to the youngest students).
 - How many places can the class find where the powers of the President are limited by another branch of government?*
 - Why did the writers of the Constitution limit the powers of the President?
 - Why are "We the People" the ultimate source of authority and not the President?
 - What role does the President play as the leader of his party? How can his party help him get his ideas passed as laws?
- Divide the class into five or six committees. Challenge each committee to select one member to play the role of President while the others play the roles of the President's assistants. The President is preparing to give a "State of the Union" speech to the Congress and to the nation. S/he will include in his/her speech all the ideas s/he would like to see the Congress turn into laws about education, health care, the economy, the environment, etc. Each committee must brainstorm the ideas for their President to include in his/her speech and help with their President's speech.
- Assign as homework a search for good ideas with parents, at the library, while watching TV, on the internet, etc.

* (Note to teacher: Congressional Committees can review actions of the Executive Branch, the Senate must approve the President's appointments and ratify all treaties, the Supreme Court can declare the actions of the Executive Branch unconstitutional.)

e.g. Only the Executive Branch can coin money, raise an army and declare war. The President appoints federal judges. The Executive Branch can hold hearings on whether the laws have been complied with.

Teachers of younger children will wish to adapt these concepts to the level of the child's understanding and introduce only those ideas they believe their students are ready to understand.)

- The teacher may wish the committees to meet several times before the speeches are finalized.
- After all the "State of the Union" speeches have been given, vote for the "President" you believe gave the best speech. Ask the "assistants" who helped the winner to stand for a round of applause from their classmates.



LESSON 5

Organize a Mock Presidential Debate

Objective: To prepare for watching the actual Presidential Debate.
Students will acquire critical viewing skills.

Materials: Pencils, paper, chart paper, markers.

Procedure:

- Ask students to help you list the qualities they believe a Presidential candidate should have. Which of these do they believe can be determined by watching the Presidential candidates debate?
- Prepare a class "Rate the Candidates" chart* on which students and parents will rate both the mock and the actual Presidential candidates. For each category, rate each candidate from one to five (see attached).*
- Decide in advance who will be the moderator for your Mock Debate. What will be the time limits for the candidate? Who will prepare the questions for the candidates? Will you have "citizen participants" who may ask their questions or will the questions be determined in advance by a special committee?
- Rehearse for the real debate by having members of the class role play the candidates for each party in a Mock Debate. The "viewers" will rate the "candidates."
- After the Mock Debate, discuss:**
 - What did you learn about the candidates or issues that you did not know prior to the debate?
 - Did the debate influence your attitudes about the issues or the candidates?
 - Were there any issues of interest to you that were not discussed during the debate?
 - Were there any issues raised that you considered irrelevant or unimportant?
 - How do debates compare with other campaign information sources (e.g. news, ads, speeches, conventions, call-in shows, on-line resources, etc.) in helping you learn about the candidates and the issues?
 - What are your reactions to the debate format (i.e. time limits, moderator, citizen participation, questions)?

* See one possible chart attached. Help students find the meanings of the words they do not yet understand. Omit questions beyond the maturity level of the students.

** Adapted from *DebateWatch*.

- If you could change one feature of the mock debate format, what would it be? Why?
- Will this Mock Debate and discussion influence the way you watch the actual debates?
- Watch the actual debates with your family and rate the real candidates on a "Rate the Candidate" chart.

The Presidential Debates

Since the first televised Presidential debate in 1960 helped put John F. Kennedy in the White House, a candidate's ability to perform under the glare of TV lights has become very important in American Presidential elections.

What will be the outcome when the candidates face off this fall? Will a decisive "win" in the debates make a difference? Should it? Tune in to one of the 2000 Presidential debates and "score" it using the chart on this page. Then answer the questions that follow with your family.

For each category, assign a rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)

CATEGORIES	Democrat	Republican	Other Candidate
Was the candidates opening statement a good one?			
How much did he/she seem to know?			
Did the candidate use evidence to back up arguments?			
Were the arguments logical?			
Was the candidate responsive to questions?			
Was the candidate nervous or at ease?			
Did the candidate seem to have the qualities of a President?			
Did you like the candidate?			
Was the candidate's closing statement a good one?			
What was your overall impression?			
TOTAL SCORE			

On a scale of 1-5, rate the value of this debate as a source of information for voters:.....

Explain your rating.....

.....

.....

In your opinion, will one of the candidates get a "bounce" in the polls as a result of this debate? How much?

Check your prediction against next week's polls.

.....

.....

.....

.....

LESSON 6

Returning to "Our Town"

Objective: To review all that has been learned thus far.

Materials: Crayons, paper, scissors, paste, pencils and pens.

Procedure: • Return to the imaginary town the students are creating.

Discuss:

- Since the last time we visited our town, we have learned a great deal more about local, state and national governments. As Election Day nears, what do you think needs to be added to our town that is missing now? How will the class decide who will be the Chief Executive of the town? Where his/her office will be? Where the legislature will meet? Where the judges will hold court?
- Will the town have a newspaper? Where will it be published?
- Who will be in charge of elections? Where will people vote? What issues will be important to the people in our town? What problems are they having? Which of the issues can best be dealt with at the local level? Which must be dealt with at the state level? Which must be dealt with at the national level?

(Note to the teacher: This lesson can be extended and expanded as long as classroom time permits, and the town can be revisited and developed at greater depth many times after the election, e.g. some classes may wish to "publish" an imaginary town newspaper, some may wish to draw analogies to the town or city in which they live and the issues of concern in their "real" world.)

LESSON 7

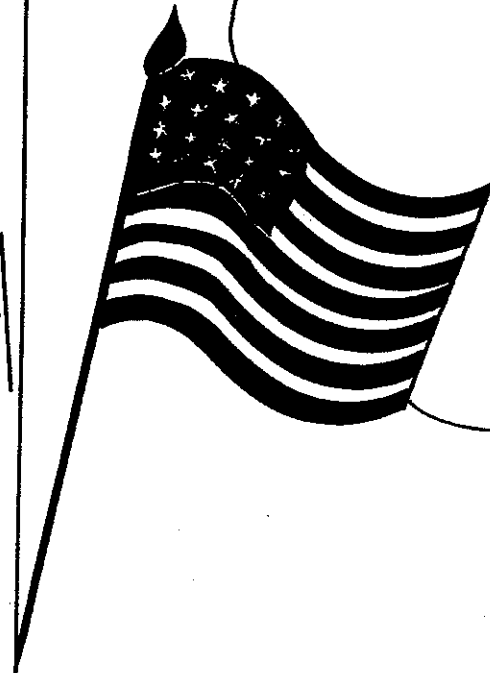
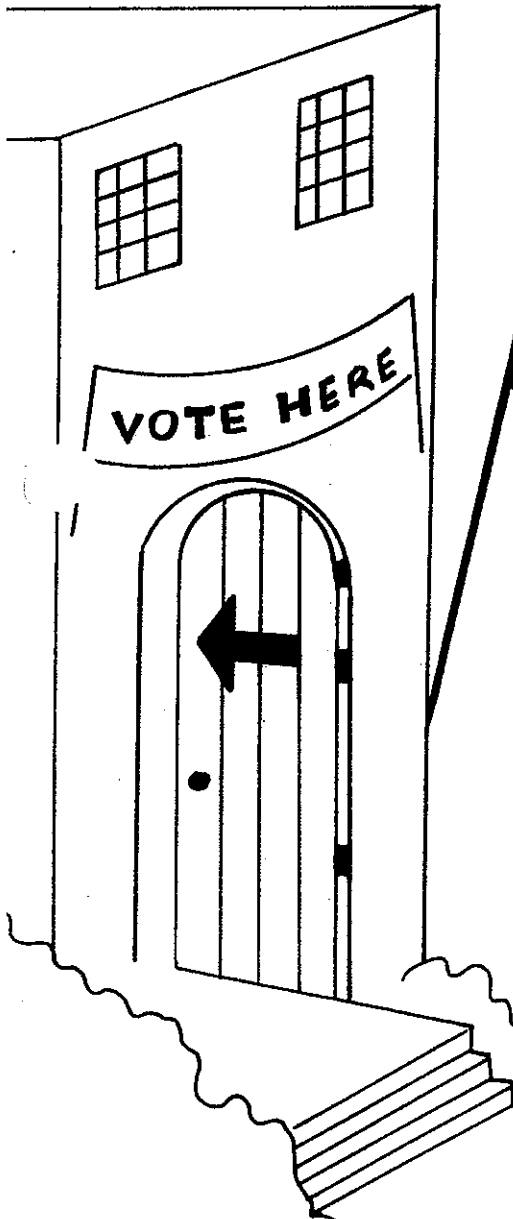
Get Out the Vote

- Objective:** Students will understand the purpose of voter registration and of advertising the mock election date.
Students will participate in getting out the vote for the real election.
- Materials:** Poster paper, markers, tape, lists of every class that is participating.
- Procedure:**
- Think about the candidate signs you saw at the beginning of the unit. What made some of them stand out? Think about color, design, message.
 - Have students make "Vote in the National Student/Parent Mock Election" posters to put up around the school with the date of the mock election and the location.
 - To register the voters, students invite each classroom that has agreed to participate to come to the classroom, or a chosen location in the school, at a certain time (maybe just before lunch or recess) to sign next to their name on a class list representing registration. Students who are absent will sign and send their signature by messenger to the class later.
 - Students will ask their parents if they are registered for the real election and if so, how they registered to vote. Students have the assignment of writing about how their parents registered (another form of writing).
 - Have a "Get-Out-the-Vote" parade around the school and send home flyers designed by students urging every parent to vote on the real election day. Give the polling place, date, and time the polls are open.

Suzie Smith
for
Senate

Danny Jones
for
Congress

Pat Curry
for
Congress



LESSON 8

The Mock Election

Objective: Students will organize and conduct a mock election for the entire school.

Materials: Posters, paper, markers, tape, copier paper box or one of that size for a ballot box, ballots for both candidates and issues, 3-sided cardboard dividers for voting booths to be taped to desks or tables for primary, pencils, calculators, request for parent volunteers, class lists of every class that is participating in the school, pencils taped down on strings at each voting place, lists of candidate and office for the counters to use when tabulating each classroom's vote, lists of issues on which students will also vote, three copies of each class list (divided into three alphabetical groupings) that will be voting in the school for the check-in stations. A large sign with all the candidates and the offices to be displayed outside the voting area. Optional: patriotic music to play outside the voting area (ask the music teacher what you might borrow). Use the school's public address system to remind classes this is Mock Election Day.

Procedure:

- With a student and parent, ask permission from the principal to call the local newspaper or TV station and see if they would like to cover the mock election in your school. It is important to give them advance notice.
- Look at above materials needed and have students help as you see fit.
- The lead teacher should ask teachers of other classrooms to sign up for a time their class can come to vote on the day of the mock election.
- On the day of the mock election, the lead teacher will divide the class into five committees. (If possible, ask parents to be poll watchers and oversee each of the five committees.)
 - *registration* – check in: get classroom lists and organize each class into three groups alphabetically. Put the letters of the grouping on a sign at each desk with a student to check in “voters” that are on the list as they come to vote. Extra students monitor the lines, answer questions and show the sign that lists all the candidates and the offices they are running for.
 - *ballot distributors* – stand by each booth and place ballots in voting booths before each student votes.
 - *poll watchers* – students answer questions at the head of the line of students waiting to vote and direct voters to the voting booths as they become available.

- *ballot box watchers* – students wait at the ballot box and show voters how to put their ballot in and make sure there is only one per voter. At the end of each class' voting period, these students collect the ballots and give them to the counters.
- *counters* – go through each ballot and tabulate the results with tally marks on the provided sheets.
- Have the students rotate duties so they can experience each job as different classes in the school come through to vote.
- After the whole school has voted, designate a group to count class and whole school totals for each candidate and for the issues. Find the sums and differences between classes. Post or announce the results by the end of the day for the whole school to see and hear. Math lessons use this data to create a large graph or poster of the results by class for the school to see.
- The school representative to the Mock Election calls in the results to the State Election Headquarters.
- On Mock Election Night, check the National Election Headquarters' results on the internet as each of the state's totals come in.
- Math lesson: On the day of the real election, compare the student results to the adult voter's results.
- Writing reflection: Discuss how the Mock Election process went. Write the following questions on the board:
 - What have students learned about how government works, candidates, running for office?
 - What is the importance of the election process?
 - What did they like about this unit?
 - What would they change?
 - What are the overall feelings and thoughts on the process we followed?
- Have students meet in small groups to discuss the questions. Have the whole class share their lists in an open discussion and write the important points on the board. Students should then write four paragraphs of their own opinions using the information gained from all the experiences. Send these reflections to the National Student/Parent Mock Election at 225 W. Oro Valley Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85737.
- Assign students to watch early results of the actual election with their parents and/or bring newspaper articles of the results. Ask older students to note the total number of votes shown on TV for one or two candidates and the time they wrote down that information.

- Post and compare the real results with the school's mock voting results. Possible math lessons can result with these numbers. How many more votes did one candidate win over another? Make a graph of the votes for each candidate.
- Write a letter to the winning candidates and congratulate them on their victories. Share what your class has learned because of the Mock Election.

Web Sites of Political Parties

These are the web pages that were open and accessible at the time of printing. Web pages are always changing. In order to get the most current information, it would be best to do a search on the Internet of a candidate you are interested in or campaign you would like to follow.

Watching Politicians

Politicians' voting records [<http://www.capitalwatch.org>]

Information on your state [[http://www.state\(two initials of your state\).us](http://www.state(two initials of your state).us)]

Democrats

Democrats in the House [<http://www.house.gov>] (click "educationalinks" and get documents to print out. Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Amendments)

Democratic Governors' Association [<http://www.democrats.org>]

College Democrats of America [http://www.democrats.org/college_democrats/]

Democratic Freedom Caucus [<http://www.progress.org/dfc/>]

Democratic National Committee [<http://www.democrats.org>]

Daily News from the DNC [<http://www.democrats.org/org/dnews>]

Democrats Senatorial Campaign Committee [<http://www.dscc.org/>]

Republicans

National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) [<http://www.nrc.org/>]

National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRCC) [<http://www.ursc.org/>]

Republican Conference of the House [<http://www.hillsource.house.gov/>]

Republican National Committee [<http://www.rnc.org>] click "getting around the RNC" to locate state races

Senate Republican Policy Committee [<http://www.senate.gov/~rpc/>]

Other Political Parties

Communist Party U.S.A. [<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/cp-usa/>]

Green Party [<http://www.greens.org/>]

Libertarian Party [<http://www.lp.org/lp>]

Libertarian Web [<http://www.libertarian.org>]

Natural Law Party [<http://www.natural-law.org/>]

Patriot Party [<http://www.home.epix.net/~dschultz/patriotl.html>]

Reform Party [<http://www.reformparty.org/index.html>]

We the People (Jerry Brown) [<http://www.wtp.org/>]



Please Return to:
The National Student/Parent Mock Election
225 West Oro Valley Drive
Tucson, AZ 85737
or fax to 520/ 742-3553

We need the information requested below in order to report on the National Student/Parent Mock Election. If funds permit, we will report back to you directly. Our grateful thanks for your help.

Teacher's name

Name of School

Address

City, State, ZIP

Telephone:

School Level:

☐ Elementary

☐ Middle or Jr. High

☐ High School

Class name or grade:

Number of students in class:

The high point (one or more) of the Mock Election process thus far:

The low point?

Your opinion of the project:

Suggestions:

Please use this page to tell us in what ways "Learning to Choose," "Safeguarding Our Democracy" and the "Teacher's Guide to the Mock Election Issues Forum" were or were not useful to you.

What did you find most helpful? Least helpful?

What would you have liked to find but did not?

Did these materials help your teaching move closer to the new national standards?

Help you use experiential activities to teach about the electoral process?
How? How not?

Please feel free to use additional pages if necessary.